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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PHSA](#) [NI](#) [CM](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: PRESS COVERAGE FOLLOWING AUG 14 BAKASSI
HANDOVER

REF: ABUJA 1632 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Cheryl Fernandes for reasons
1.4. (b & d).

11. (SBU) In the first day following Nigeria's handover of the disputed Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon, press coverage was considerably less than the days preceding the handover and the rhetoric was noticeably reduced. Articles instead focused predominantly on reporting the details of the handover ceremony, reprinting excerpts of the speeches, and providing a synopsis of the history of the Bakassi dispute. The GON National Economic Council, chaired by Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, made public statements on August 15 urging governors of states neighboring Bakassi to assist Nigerian returnees. Former military Head of State General Yakubu Gowon told the BBC Hausa Service that Nigeria took the "right step" in ceding the peninsula. Leadership newspaper reported former President Olusegun Obasanjo refused to comment on the handover.

12. (SBU) The few statements opposing the handover in the August 16 press were almost exclusively attributed to members of the National Assembly. Representative Dino Melaye (PDP, Kogi State) announced the opening of a register for House members to voice their displeasure to the administration. Representative Eziuche Ubani (PDP, Abia State) called the handover "annoying and disappointing" and in "flagrant disobedience to the clarion calls by Nigerians." Senator Florence Ita-Giwa (APP, Cross River State), who attended the handover ceremony, maintained that "the struggle had just begun."
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